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**WHA Press Guidance (untasked)  
May 1, 2002**

**VENEZUELA: MAY 1 DEMONSTRATIONS**

**Q: Do you have any comment regarding the May 1  
Labor Day demonstrations in Venezuela?**

**A: THE UNITED STATES CALLS ON ALL PARTIES -- THE  
VENEZUELAN CONFEDERATION OF WORKERS (CTV), THE  
BOLIVARIAN WORKERS FRONT, CIVIC AND POLITICAL  
LEADERS -- TO SHOW FULL RESPECT FOR THE PEACEFUL  
EXPRESSION OF POLITICAL OPINION AND TO ACT WITH  
RESTRAINT.**

**WE URGE ALL VENEZUELAN TO FIND PEACEFUL,  
DEMOCRATIC SOLUTIONS FOR THEIR DIFFERENCES. ALL  
INTERACTION AND SOLUTIONS MUST BE LEGAL,  
CONSTITUTIONAL AND RESPECT THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS  
OF DEMOCRACY AS OUTLINED IN THE INTER-AMERICAN  
DEMOCRATIC CHARTER. WE ALSO ENCOURAGE THE  
GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA FULLY RESPECT THE RIGHT  
OF ITS CITIZENS TO EXERCISE THEIR FREEDOMS OF  
EXPRESSION AND ASSOCIATION.**

**AS STATED HERE BEFORE, WE WELCOME PRESIDENT  
CHAVEZ'S CALLS FOR NATIONAL REFLECTION AND  
DIALOGUE TO ACHIEVE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. WE  
LOOK FOR CREDIBLE ACTIONS TO CARRY THIS OUT. IT IS**

**INCUMBENT UPON THE GOVERNMENT AND ALL PARTS OF THE VENEZUELAN OPPOSITION TO ENGAGE IN FULL AND GENUINE DIALOGUE TO MAKE THIS PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION A SUCCESS.**

**WE URGE THE GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA TO ACCEPT THE OFFER OF ASSISTANCE BY THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS), WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE INTER-AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC CHARTER, TO FACILITATE THE STRENGTHENING OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN VENEZUELA. THE OAS IN ITS APRIL 18 RESOLUTION OPENED UP THE TOOLBOX OF THE INTER-AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC CHARTER TO ASSIST VENEZUELA IN RESTORING THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF DEMOCRACY. ACCEPTING THIS OFFER OF ASSISTANCE, WHICH VENEZUELA HAS NOT YET DONE, WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARD RECONCILIATION IN VENEZUELA, AND WOULD HELP CREATE A POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH THE MOST EFFECTIVE NATIONAL DIALOGUE COULD TAKE PLACE.**

[Background: The Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CTV), Venezuela's central trade union organization, is celebrating May Day in Venezuela by holding its traditional march. CTV's march will protest

against President Chavez's government. Additionally, the pro-Chavez Bolivarian Workers Front is also holding march. As currently planned, these marches will not come into contact with one another. The Venezuelan security forces will have over 2,000 people on hand to maintain order.]